

IN THE CLAIMS

Please add new claims 89-105 as indicated below:

89. (New) In an orthopedic implant assembly which has a stabilizing element having an anterior surface, a posterior surface, and at least one bore with an anterior portion, a posterior portion having a transverse dimension smaller than a transverse dimension of the anterior portion and which has a securing element having an elongated body and an enlarged integral head with a maximum transverse dimension greater than a transverse dimension of the posterior portion of the bore in the stabilizing element, the improvement comprising:

a resilient radially deflectable stopping member which is configured to engage a surface of the assembly and prevent the back-out of the securing element through the bore of the stabilizing element and which is slidably disposed within a groove provided within the assembly.

90. (New) The assembly of claim 89 wherein the stopping member comprises a biased collar.

91. (New) The assembly of claim 90 wherein the biased collar has a first configuration and is elastically deformable to a second configuration.

92. (New) The assembly of claim 91 wherein the second configuration is an expanded configuration.

93. (New) The assembly of claim 91 wherein the biased collar extends at least partially within the bore of the stabilizing element so that the head of the securing element is retained between anterior and posterior portions of the bore.

94. (New) In an orthopedic implant assembly which has a stabilizing element having an anterior surface, a posterior surface, and at least one bore with an anterior portion, a posterior portion having a transverse dimension smaller than a transverse dimension of the anterior portion and which has a securing element having an elongated body and an enlarged integral head with a maximum transverse dimension greater than a transverse dimension of the posterior portion of the bore in the stabilizing element, the improvement comprising:

a resilient longitudinally deflectable stopping member which is configured to engage a surface of the assembly and prevent the back-out of the securing element through the bore of the stabilizing element.

95. (New) The orthopedic implant assembly of claim 94 wherein the resilient longitudinally deflectable member is configured to deflect longitudinally when the stopping member passes by the engaged surface when advancing posteriorly through the bore of the stabilizing element.

96. (New) An orthopedic implant assembly, comprising:

- a. a stabilizing element having [an anterior surface, a posterior surface, and] at least one bore with an anterior bore portion which has a transverse dimension, a posterior bore portion which has a transverse dimension smaller than the transverse dimension of the anterior bore portion; and
- b. a biased stopping member which has a first configuration that extends within the at least one bore of the stabilizing element and reduces at least one transverse cross-sectional dimension of the bore passageway and which is elastically deformable to a second configuration which increases

the at least one transverse cross-sectional dimension reduced by the biased stopping member in the first configuration; and

c. a securing element having an elongated body and an enlarged integral head which has a maximum transverse dimension greater than the transverse dimension of the bore passageway reduced by first configuration of the biased stopping member and greater than a transverse dimension of the posterior bore portion in the stabilizing element, so that the head of the securing element is retained between the biased stopping member and the posterior portion of the bore.

97. (New) The orthopedic implant assembly of claim 96 wherein the elastically deformed second configuration of the stopping member facilitates passage of the integral head of the securing element by the stopping member.

98. The orthopedic implant assembly of claim 97 wherein the biased stopping member elastically returns from the second configuration back to the first configuration.

99. (New) The assembly of claim 96 wherein the biased stopping member comprises a collar.

100. (New) The assembly of claim 99 wherein the biased stopping member is disposed in part within a recess of the stabilizing element.

101. (New) The assembly of claim 100 wherein the recess is a groove configured to slidably receive the biased collar.

102. (New) An orthopedic attachment member, comprising:

- a. an attachment component which has at least one bore configured to receive a securing component with an enlarged integral portion, the bore having a first bore passageway portion, and a second bore passageway portion having at least one smaller transverse dimension than transverse dimensions of the first bore passageway portion;
- b. a biased stopping surface which reduces a transverse configuration of the first bore passageway portion to retain the enlarged integral portion of a securing component within the bore of the attachment component between the stopping surface and the second bore passageway portion; and
- c. a third bore passageway portion between the biased stopping surface and the second bore passageway portion having a surface configured to conform at least in part to part of the enlarged portion of a securing component received by the bore.

103. (New) The orthopedic attachment member of claim 102 wherein the biased stopping member is elastically deformable from the first configuration to a second configuration which increases the at least one transverse cross-sectional dimension reduced by the biased stopping member in the first configuration.

104. (New) The orthopedic attachment member of claim 103 wherein the biased stopping member is elastically deformed by the passage of an enlarged integral portion of the securing component.

105. (New) The orthopedic attachment member of claim 104 wherein the biased stopping member resiliently returns to the first configuration after passage of the enlarged integral portion of the securing component.